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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
Fourth session
10-21 February 1997

# Decision III/12 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

## Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests the text of decision III/12, adopted by the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 4 to 15 November 1996.

The Conference of the Parties decided to transmit this decision, as well as the related recommendation II/8 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, to the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests as a contribution to its del[illegible]cations.

Decision III/12 is attached.

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## Decision III/12 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

### FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR TERRESTRIAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Conference of the Parties,

Affirming that some forests can play a crucial role in conserving biological diversity, and recognizing that some forests are becoming degraded and their biological diversity lost,

Recognizing that issues related to forests must be dealt with in a comprehensive and holistic manner, including environmental, economic and social values and issues,

Affirming also that the Convention has a clear role and mandate in issues of forest biological diversity,

Noting that the conservation and sustainable use of forests cannot be isolated from the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in general,

Noting also that the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity must be an integral part of sustainable forest management practices,

Noting further that the implementation of forest conservation and sustainable use policies depends, inter alia, on the level of public awareness and policies outside the forest sector,

Recognizing the vital role played by forest ecosystems for many indigenous and local communities,

Reaffirming the statement on biological diversity and forests contained in the annex to decision II/9 transmitted from the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests,

1. Welcomes the comprehensive work taking place under the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and acknowledges the cooperation between the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity;

2. Endorses recommendation II/8 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice as contained in the annex to this decision;

3. Affirms that the Convention on Biological Diversity will be working in a complementary way with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and other forest-related forums on forests and biological diversity, with a view to avoiding duplication of effort;

4. Decides to invite its President to transmit this decision on forests and its annex to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests at its fourth meeting;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary to explore ways and means to cooperate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests or any successor process on matters relating to biological diversity and forests including inter-sessional work, with a view to developing common priorities for further consideration. In this process the Executive Secretary should take account of the research and technical priorities listed in recommendation II/8 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

6. Further requests the Executive Secretary to develop a focused work programme for forest biological diversity. Optional elements for such a work programme should initially focus on research, cooperation and the development of technologies necessary for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity. In addition the programme should:

(a) Take account of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and other forest-related forums;

(b) Facilitate the application and integration of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the sustainable management of forests at the national, regional and global levels, in accordance with the ecosystem approach;

(c) Complement and not duplicate the work of relevant international forums, notably the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests;

(d) Complement existing national, regional or international criteria and indicator frameworks for sustainable forest management;

(e) Incorporate traditional systems of forest biological diversity conservation;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary in developing this draft work programme, to work closely with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and relevant institutions, and also to take full account of the decisions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, noting in particular the report on institutional aspects contained in the programme element V.1 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests mandate resulting from the Swiss/Peruvian initiative on forests held in support of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and encourages all Parties actively to assist the Executive Secretary in carrying out this work;

8. Requests the Executive Secretary to report on progress in the draft programme of work to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties for its discussion and consideration;

9. Requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to contribute advice on this draft programme of work and report back to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and also requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, in providing its advice, to bear in mind for possible future action, inter alia, the remaining forest research priority items listed in its recommendation II/8;

10. Directs the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, in the light of the proposed work programme and taking account of the research and technical priorities already identified in its recommendation II/8, to advance its scientific, technical, and technological consideration of forest biological diversity by initially focusing on the synthesis and development of scientific information in the following research areas:

(a) Methodologies necessary to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for the conservation of biological diversity as part of sustainable forest management;

(b) Scientific analysis of the ways in which human activities, in particular forest management practices, influence biological diversity and assessment of ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences.

Annex

INPUT TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity wishes to transmit to the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), for its consideration, the decision of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties on biological diversity and forests, as well as the related recommendation II/8 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The decision by the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop a draft work programme for forest biological diversity and gives guidance to SBSTTA on research priorities. These documents are presented as contributions to the IPF deliberations and in the spirit of continuing our positive dialogue and cooperation.

Related recommendations

(a) Biodiversity considerations should be integrated fully into the IPF recommendations and proposals for action. IPF should also consider ways to deal with identified gaps in forest biodiversity knowledge.

(b) In relation to the programme element I.1 of IPF on national forest and land use plans, strategies for sustainable forest management should be based on an ecosystem approach, which will integrate conservation measures (e.g., protected areas) and sustainable use of biological diversity. Methodologies need to be developed to assist countries in identifying sites of high interest for biodiversity. These recommendations should take into account national financial circumstances, laws and regulations.

(c) In relation to the programme element III.2 of IPF dealing with criteria and indicators, conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, as well as the maintenance of forest quality, as part of sustainable forest management, should be substantively included in the deliberations of IPF.

The following research and technological priorities were also identified:

(a) Building the scientific foundation and methodologies necessary to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for forest quality and biodiversity conservation as part of sustainable forest management;

(b) Analysing the role of biodiversity in forest ecosystem functioning;

(c) Analysing measures for mitigating the underlying causes of biodiversity loss;

(d) Advancing scientific and technical approaches to (i) rehabilitating degraded and deforested ecosystems and (ii) enriching biodiversity in forest plantations;

(e) Identifying gaps in knowledge in the areas of fragmentation and population viability, to include mitigation options such as corridors and buffer zones;

(f) Assessing ecological landscape models, the integration of protected areas in the ecosystem approach to sustainable forest management and the representativeness and adequacy of protected areas networks;

(g) Analysing scientifically the ways in which human activities, in particular forest management practices, influence biodiversity and assessing ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences; and

(h) Developing assessment and evaluation methodologies for the multiple benefits derived from forest biodiversity.

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